

OSWER SUMMER INTERNS – Project Descriptions – 2015

Name of Project:

Monitoring RCRA Hazardous Waste Permitting Program Progress, Addressing Environmental Justice/Public Participation Concerns, and Providing Web Information Support

Describe program (mission/objectives):

EPA's Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR), Program Implementation and Information Division (PIID), Permits Branch is the national program lead for the RCRA permits program and the TSCA PCB approvals program. It is responsible for developing regulations, national policy, and guidance for both programs. Specifically, the branch is working on post-closure guidance and Waste Analysis Plan guidance and its accompanying training module. The branch works closely with Regional and State permit writers on a wide range of technical and policy issues involving permitting at RCRA storage, treatment, and disposal facilities and PCB storage and disposal facilities.

The RCRA hazardous waste permit program handles the following issues: financial responsibility under RCRA and support to CERCLA relating to financial responsibility for hard rock mining; public participation in permitting; used oil management; and post-closure. It is also responsible for national implementation of the permitting program, working with the regions and states to lead initiatives and to accomplish goals relating to safe waste management. Currently, the branch is leading a permit modification initiative.

Define project(s), objective(s) and tasks/assignment(s):

Project(s):

- One project involves working with the RCRA permitting team to monitor the progress of EPA regions and states in achieving their permitting goals under RCRA or other assessments of the data. The intern will develop an understanding of the RCRA permits program, federalism considerations in implementing the program, and/or the particulars of tracking GPRA permitting goals (including RCRAInfo, the RCRA data base) if projects are available to the intern when the intern arrives.
- A second project comes within the Environmental Justice in Permitting Initiative to address environmental justice (EJ) concerns associated with facilities that have EPA-issued hazardous waste permits. PIID staff participates on 'communities of practice' workgroups (together with Regional representatives) to develop tools to assess areas of EJ concern located near hazardous waste facilities,
- A third project involves the re-design of the office's programmatic web sites into a new format. This work involves supporting the office's web team in revising and ensuring that web links are accurate.
- As time permits may participate in other key activity areas such as national conference calls and workgroups addressing permitting policy and implementation issues (e.g., post closure guidance, waste analysis guidance).

Objective(s):

The intern will work with EPA staff in the Permits Branch, ORCR, Superfund and other headquarters program offices on the activities and projects detailed above.

The intern will develop an understanding of the national role in the RCRA and PCB program, as well as the role of EPA regions and states. In working on regulations, the intern will develop an understanding of the EPA regulation development process and how EPA establishes environmental policies and practices.

Task(s)/assignment(s):

The intern will be assigned tasks or tasks similar to those listed below:

- Research and prepare draft issue papers, briefings and decision documents.
- Acquire information from governmental and non-governmental sources to prepare analyses of data bases.
- Assist in preparing PowerPoint presentations
- The intern may occasionally also work on other projects in the Permits Branch's programs.

Identify prerequisite qualifications:

- Good communication skills, experience working with teams or public
- Good writing skills, experience preparing short informational documents
- Good research skills, including web researching skills
- Intermediate skills in Microsoft Office applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access
- Interest/course work in environmental policy

Describe any other requirements such as travel or training: If you know there will be travel costs associated with conferences or training, please make sure to list details and costs here:

No travel is anticipated.